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Belle Sadgwar

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BELLE SADGWAR

By Anna T. Cooper

Among the unforgettable experiences in an old teacher's memory chest are those rare glimpses deep down straight into the heart of things, beyond the rub and fret of marks, the routine of percentages and averages, the statistics of ratings, and gradings of promotions and retardations, and the weary rest of it. It not unfrequently happens thus in the contacts of our profession that soul actually touches soul, not officially, as teacher meets pupils, but in the one supreme and essentially "extra-curricula activity" as friend meets friend in naked truth and genuine simplicity.

Such a precious remembrance have I of dear Belle Sadgwar, whom it is impossible for me to picture to myself as having so soon "finished her course." Life's school already completed and now really and truly "promoted" to a higher grade beyond our ken. I shall always remember her as the same charming young creature, deliberately choosing in class the front seat nearest my right with that intimate understanding smile of hers, characteristic of an innocent child nestling up to its mother.

Strangely enough we have not met since she graduated—another proof that while the earth has grown smaller our circles of contacts are immeasurably larger, so that although individuals for a while meet daily in the regular routine of life, their several orbits may later swing apart never to cross again till one day the shock comes that a being we had come to regard almost as a part of our own has passed out of reach, perhaps, forever.

Indeed the last conscious meeting I recall with Belle Sadgwar was at a surprise party which she had engineered at my house bringing together her classmates in Cicero, June 22, 1927. They left on my mantel a beautiful framed sentiment beginning, "You are my friend," and I gave each member a card of the Dunbar Alma Mater Song having inscribed on the back the well-remembered passage from

Marcellus which begins, "This ought not to be considered your life which is limited by body and breath; that, that I say, is your life which eternity itself will keep and care for." Many choice spirits were in that party that 22nd day of June, and I can only dare to hope that the souvenir passed on to them has been held as precious in their memories as this which they left for me will always be. Here it is:

"You are my friend, you warm my heart,

In all my thoughts you have a part,

In all I say, in all I do

There is a comforting bit of you;

I see your smile, I feel your hand,

I hear your voice and understand.

No word will mar, no deed will end

This comradeship of yours, my Friend."

Priceless, wonderful, is it not?